



2007 ANNUAL REPORT TOMPKINS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Tompkins County Environmental Management Council (EMC) was created in 1971 by a resolution of the County Board of Representatives. The EMC acts as an advisory body to the County Legislature on matters affecting the preservation, development and use of the natural features of the County. The EMC identifies problems, proposes priorities, and coordinates activities in the development and management of our natural resources. It provides a public forum to discuss issues related to the natural environment in Tompkins County.

Staff and equipment are shared between the EMC and the Tompkins County Planning Department. The EMC reports directly to the County Legislature's Planning, Development & Environmental Quality Committee (PDEQ). County Legislator Martha Robertson served as the Legislature's liaison to the EMC in 2007.

Stephen Nicholson served a fifth term as Chair. He reported to PDEQ on the EMC's projects throughout the year and served as the group's primary liaison to the Legislature. Neha Khanna, Glynn Bebee and Mark Whitmore served as Vice Chairs.

Joan Jurkowich, of the county's Planning Department, provided organizational and technical assistance to the Council and coordinated EMC activities with other governmental advisory boards, County departments, and the Legislature.

The *EMC News* was published for the fourteenth year in 2007. The *News* is the EMC's forum to introduce resolutions, make announcements, provide committee reports and update members and other interested parties on EMC activities each month.

EMC members are appointed by the County Legislature to serve two-year terms. All twelve at-large seats were filled in the beginning of 2007, and two were vacated by resignation during the year. Thirteen municipal members (out of sixteen) also served as representatives from the City of Ithaca, the towns of Caroline, Danby, Dryden, Enfield, Ithaca, Lansing, Newfield, and Ulysses, and the villages of Dryden, Cayuga Heights, Groton, and Lansing. Municipal representatives provide an important link between countywide and local issues. Ten associate members were appointed to participate on EMC committees. Members have a variety of backgrounds and levels of expertise.

EMC members participate on the Council by attending monthly general meetings, working in task-oriented committees, and serving as liaisons to other organizations. Six committees were formed at the organizational meeting at the beginning of 2007: Air Quality, Education/ Communication, Energy, Environmental Review, Unique Natural Areas, and Website.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Special presentations and discussions at the regular monthly EMC meetings included:

- Kate Hackett, Water Resources Coordinator and Senior Planner at Tompkins County Planning Department, provided an update on development of a monitoring plan for Cayuga Lake.
- Andy Zepp, Executive Director of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, gave a presentation on FLLT's Emerald Necklace open space preservation targeted areas.
- Crystal Buck, Senior Planner at Tompkins County Planning Department, provided information and invited feedback on the Tompkins County Forest Management Plan during its development.
- Crystal Buck gave a status report on the Conservation Plan prepared by the Tompkins County Planning Department.
- John Rancich spoke of his hope to develop a wind farm in the Town of Enfield. He provided information and answered questions from EMC members.
- Dr. Cornelia Yoder gave a presentation on global warming, focusing on its effects and the expected impacts on the Ithaca area.
- Paul Curtis, Cornell Extension Wildlife Specialist, visited EMC and provided information on a deer control concept for the main Cornell University campus and the woodland and farm areas near campus.
- Professor Richard Hoebeke spoke of invasive insects, focusing primarily on five species: viburnum leaf beetle (very common in Tompkins County), Asian longhorned beetle, brown marmorated stink bug, sirex woodwasp, and the emerald ash borer.
- Leslie Schill, Senior Planner at Tompkins County Planning Department, presented an update on the Local Energy Action Plan and the goals of Tompkins County to reach targeted reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2008.

The EMC also scheduled quarterly municipal reports in 2007, facilitating communication on environmental issues and giving municipalities an opportunity to utilize the skills and resources of the EMC.

Minutes from the monthly EMC meetings and presentation materials are posted on the EMC website at www.tompkins-co.org/emc.

RESOLUTIONS AND POLICY

The EMC passed three resolutions in 2007. The first was passed in March, "In Support of an Application to the State Wildlife Grant Program." This grant would have funded the update and expansion of the Unique Natural Areas Inventory. The grant application was not funded.

The second resolution passed in June, "Recommending County Support for the Enfield Energy Wind Project." (See report of the Energy Committee, page 4.)

The third resolution passed in July, "Recommending the Protection of Sapsucker Woods UNA-106." (See report of the Environmental Review Committee, page 5.)

The EMC also adopted a policy in October for amending the Unique Natural Areas Inventory between the ten-year reviews. This allows consideration for additions, deletions, and boundary changes.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Adopt-a-Highway

The EMC participates in the adopt-a-highway program, maintaining a portion of New York State Route 13 between Warren Road and Route 366. Three clean-ups were held in 2007. At the end of 2007, the Golden Hard Hat Award was granted to Martha Ferger for her outstanding participation in cleanups.

County Government Sustainability Program

In 2006, the EMC formally endorsed the County's efforts to develop a sustainability program. In 2007, new policies for the County on surplus equipment, green purchasing, and waste reduction were working their way to the Legislature from the Facilities & Infrastructure Committee.

NYS Association of EMCs

The EMC remained active with the New York State Association of Environmental Management Councils (NYSAEMC). Steve Nicholson, EMC Chair, attended the annual NYSAEMC-sponsored Department of Environmental Conservation update in Albany in June. Steve Nicholson and Mikel Shakarjian continued to serve as at-large director/treasurer and president of NYSAEMC, respectively. EMC member Jacie Spoon, from the Village of Groton, attended the annual Conference on the Environment in October.

COMMITTEE & LIAISON ACTIVITIES

Air Quality

Members: Glynn Bebee (chair), Neha Khanna, Dooley Kiefer, Dan Lamb, Larry Sallinger, Cindy Schulte, Roger Segelken

The Air Quality Committee worked to generate a list of priority topics and action items for 2007, considering such factors as past committee activities, recent public concerns, general media coverage, state and national trends and individual committee members' interests. The list created by the committee included items such as the County open burning regulations, awareness about vehicle idling and existing laws, again offering support to local plastic recycling efforts and consideration of increasing public comments regarding outdoor boiler- and furnace-type heating devices.

Regarding the open burning regulations, the Air Quality Committee considered ways to continue education about the Tompkins County laws and the health impacts related to burn barrels and the open burning of household waste. When discussing vehicle idling, the committee also acknowledged existing laws and regulations in both New York State and in local municipalities, such that again education and public outreach were considered to be the most appropriate actions required to address the topic. And of the topics listed above, the most contentious may be outdoor heating devices. These are topics the committee expects to address in 2008.

Education/Communication

Members: Jon Baker, Scott Doyle, Dan Lamb (chair), Ashley Miller, Jacie Spoon, Lucia Tyler

While the committee suffered a mid year setback with the departure of its original chair, it did meet several times in the first half of the year and advanced the following: The committee worked with the Tompkins County

Public Information Officer to establish new protocols for sharing the EMC's work via local media outlets. The committee considers many work areas of the EMC to be of public interest and that better access to local media should be maintained. The committee determined that guest editorials, letters to the editor, and press releases should be used to inform the public about EMC matters such as bagless shopping, outdoor burning, Earth Day, UNAs, outdoor furnaces, and various green energy initiatives. A guest opinion piece on plastic bags was under review at the end of the year and will be submitted to the local newspaper.

Energy

Members: Jon Baker, Glynn Bebee, Kenny Christianson (chair), Keith Epstein, Peter Harriott, Dooley Kiefer, Jack Liou, Mike Miles, Steve Nicholson, Tania Schusler, Jacie Spoon, Marissa Weiss, Jeni Wightman

The Energy Committee had a relatively quiet year in 2007 compared to years past. In addition to member participation, Gay Nicholson of Sustainable Tompkins, Kent Johnson of the City of Ithaca, John Rancich of Enfield Energy, and Arel LeMaro from Tompkins County Facilities also attended meetings. The committee met five times during the year.

Initiatives for 2007 included a resolution in support of the Enfield Energy wind project that was adopted by the EMC in June. We met with John Rancich to discuss concerns about the project. The committee helped to sponsor two educational events, setting up displays for Earth Day in April and Ithaca Festival in June. A Binghamton University student, Joshua Rasin, developed a model to predict the output of the library solar panels.

The committee continues to monitor the Local Action Plan adopted in 2002, which calls for a 20% reduction in emissions by 2008. We

assisted the County intern in preparing a report on county electricity use to determine the status of the Local Action Plan. Members of the committee continue to be active in other local groups, such as Sustainable Tompkins, the Green Building Alliance, and the Tompkins Renewable Energy Education Alliance.

Environmental Review

Members: Walter Buble, John Dennis, Herb Engman, Joyce Gerbasi, Dooley Kiefer, Mikel Shakarjian, Larry Sharpsteen, Lucia Tyler, Steve Uzmann, Mark Whitmore (chair)

The Environmental Review Committee (ERC) considered many projects over the past year. We raised concerns over the hydrological and biological aspects of a planned development in Unique Natural Area-106, Sapsucker Woods, wrote to the Town of Ithaca Planning Department and crafted a resolution that was adopted by the EMC. We responded to the City of Ithaca after their creation of a temporary off-leash dog park with our concerns about the dogs not staying within the bounds of the park and disturbing animals in the Hog Hole UNA as well as in the grasslands and shoreline of the Allan H. Treman State Marina. We participated in a panel discussion, and wrote a letter to the Mayor and Common Council members requesting the City study the use of the park and install a fence to minimize unwanted interaction with dogs. We are currently reviewing the Scoping Document for the City of Ithaca Drinking Water Upgrade Project, a clustered housing development near the hospital, and the Black Diamond Trail proposal.

Unique Natural Areas

Members: Karen Edelstein, Martha Ferger, Dooley Kiefer, Steve Nicholson, Roger Segelken, Gary Stewart, Steve Uzmann, Marissa Weiss, Mark Whitmore (chair)

The Unique Natural Areas Committee (UNA) has been engaged in the process of updating the full inventory of UNA's to incorporate any changes to the boundaries and incorporate

additional biological information, especially with regard to sensitive species of plants and animals. The committee submitted a proposal to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation wildlife grants program on species of greatest conservation need. This proposal was not funded but focused our attention on the possibilities for utilizing GIS as a framework for the UNA data. The committee drafted a formal protocol for the process of adding or revising UNA's which was formally adopted by the EMC. Over the coming year we expect to evaluate the UNA inventory for UNA's that obviously require revision and we will be speaking with experts in order to incorporate information on organisms that are currently poorly represented in the inventory, such as reptiles and amphibians.

Website

Members: Glynn Bebee, Keith Epstein (chair), Neha Khanna, Stan Marcus, Mike Miles, Jacie Spoon

2007 was another maintenance year for the EMC website. We updated the website consistently with current newsletters, agendas, minutes, resolutions, and meeting dates. Several new items were added to the "EMC in the news" section. In the beginning of the year, we planned to update the current issues section, but time did not permit it this year. We started working with the Unique Natural Areas committee with the goal of making UNA information available online. This project is still underway, and will continue into 2008.

EMC Liaisons

EMC members served as liaisons to the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, Intermunicipal Organization for Cayuga Lake Management Planning ("IO"), Cornell Community Waste Management Advisory Committee, Finger Lakes Land Trust, and Tompkins County Water Resources Council. Liaisons attended and participated in meetings, and reported back to the EMC.

2007 EMC MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Appointed At-Large Members

Jonathan Baker	Dan Lamb
Kenneth Christianson	Ashley Miller
Scott Doyle	Gary Stewart
Herb Engman	Marissa Weiss
Keith Epstein	Mark Whitmore
Neha Khanna	Roger Yonkin

Legislature Liaison

Martha Robertson

Associate Members

Walter Buble	Jack Liou
Karen Edelstein	Tania Schusler
Joyce Gerbasi	Mikel Shakarjian
Peter Harriott	Steve Uzmann
Dooley Kiefer	Jenifer Wightman

Appointed Municipal Members

Glynn Bebee – City of Ithaca
John Dennis – Village of Lansing
Martha Ferger – Village of Dryden
Stanley Marcus – Town of Dryden
Michael Miles – Town of Enfield
Stephen Nicholson – Town of Caroline
Robert Roe -- Town of Danby
Larry Sallinger – Town of Ithaca
Cindy Schulte -- Town of Newfield
Roger Segelken – Village of Cayuga Heights
Larry Sharpsteen -- Town of Lansing
Jacalyn Spoon – Village of Groton
Lucia Tyler -- Town of Ulysses

EMC Staff

Dariele Drake – Principal Account Clerk
Joan Jurkowich -- Coordinator
Kathy Wilsea -- Secretary